

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) In a fence brace assembly having:

at least one substantially hollow post, comprising a stabilizing surface and a securing surface, said stabilizing surface and said securing surface being substantially opposite each other and having an inner surface and an outer surface;

at least one member, comprising at least one tab;

wherein said stabilizing surface comprises at least one opening, and said securing surface comprises at least one tab-slot;

wherein said member passes through said opening in the stabilizing surface;

wherein said tab enters said tab slots in said securing surface;

wherein the improvement comprises:

said tab having a notch;

said tab-slot shaped to engage said tab when said member is rotated to engage the tab with the tab-slot; and

said member having a tab end consisting of at least one tab and a recessed non-tab surface;

said recessed non-tab surface shaped such that its entire surface area fits flush against the internal surface diameter of the stabilizing surface when to come into substantially continuous flush contact with the inner surface of said securing surface when the tab is engaged via rotation of the member to engage the tab with the tab-slot via the notch.

2. (currently Amended) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, having at least one ~~wherein~~ said opening is located directly opposite to at least one tab-slot, so that when the tab is engaged with the tab-slot, the longitudinal axis of the member is oriented at an angle of about 90° relative to said stabilizing surface.
3. (currently amended) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, having at least one ~~wherein~~ said opening is not directly opposite, but offset from at least one tab-slot, so that the longitudinal axis of the member is oriented at a non-90° angle relative to said stabilizing surface.
4. (currently amended) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, having ~~wherein~~ said post is comprised of metal tubing.
5. (currently amended) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, having ~~wherein~~ said member is comprised of metal tubing.
6. (currently amended) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, having at least one ~~wherein~~ said opening corresponding ~~corresponds~~ in shape and size to said member.
7. (currently amended) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, having at least one opening shaped so that ~~wherein~~ said member passes snugly through said said opening.
8. (canceled)
9. (canceled)
10. (currently amended) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, having ~~wherein~~ the size and shape of said tab-slots corresponding ~~corresponds~~ to said tabs.
11. (canceled)
12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) In the The fence brace assembly of claim 1, wherein the improvement further comprises that produced by a process wherein said at least one opening is produced by the process of being cut by a laser.

14. (currently amended) In a A method for assembling a fence brace assembly, having the steps of:

providing at least one substantially hollow post, comprising a stabilizing surface and a securing surface, said stabilizing surface and said securing surface being substantially opposite each other and having an inner surface and an outer surface;

providing at least one member, comprising at least one tab end, said tab end having at least one tab and a recessed non-tab surface;

wherein said stabilizing surface comprises at least one opening, and said securing surface comprises at least one tab-slot;

passing said member through said opening;

wherein the improvement comprises:

providing a notch in said tab;

providing a tab-slot being shaped to engage said notched tab when said member is rotated to engage the tab with the tab-slot;

providing a shaped non-tab surface of the member, shaped such that its entire surface area fits flush against the internal surface diameter of the stabilizing surface to come into substantially continuous flush contact with the inner surface of said securing surface when said tab is engaged via rotation of the member to engage the tab with the tab-slot via the notch;

passing said at least one notched tab into said tab-slot;

and rotating said member to:

i) engage said notched tab with said tab-slot; and

ii) to position the recessed non-tab surface of said member such that its entire surface area fits flush against the internal surface diameter of the stabilizing surface ~~into substantially continuous flush contact with the inner surface of said securing surface.~~

15. (currently amended) The method for assembling a fence brace assembly of claim 14, having at least one ~~wherein~~ said opening is located directly opposite to at least one tab-slot, so that when the tab is engaged with the tab-slot, ~~member is rotated into the engaged position, said at least one tab is engaged with said at least one tab slot, such that~~ the longitudinal axis of the member is oriented at an angle of about 90° relative to said stabilizing surface.
16. (currently amended) The method for assembling a fence brace assembly of claim 14, having at least one ~~wherein~~ opening is not directly opposite said tab slots, but is offset from at least one tab-slot, so that when the tab is engaged with the tab-slot, ~~member is rotated into the engaged position,~~ the longitudinal axis of the member is oriented at a non-90° angle relative to said stabilizing surface.
17. (currently amended) In the ~~The~~ method for assembling a fence brace assembly of claim 14, wherein the improvement further comprises ~~having~~ the additional step of sealing the area of ~~substantial~~ contact between the non-tab surface area of the member and the inner surface of the securing surface ~~post is sealed.~~
18. (currently amended) In the ~~The~~ method for assembling a fence brace assembly of claim 17, wherein the improvement further comprises ~~the~~ said ~~sealing is done~~ using a silicone ~~silieon~~ sealer.
19. (canceled)

20. (currently amended) A kit for assembling a fence brace assembly having component parts capable of being assembled, the kit comprising:

at least one post, capable of being joined to at least one member;

at least one member, capable of being joined to the post;

said post comprising:

i) a stabilizing surface and a securing surface, said stabilizing surface and said securing surface being substantially opposite each other and having an inner surface and an outer surface;

ii) at least one tab-slot in said securing surface, said tab-slot capable of accepting and engaging a notched tab by the via rotation of the tab;

iii) at least one opening in said securing surface, said opening capable of accepting said at least one member;

said member comprising:

iii) at least one tab end consisting of at least one tab and a recessed non-tab surface,

iv) at least one tab being notched and thereby being capable of engaging with the tab-slot when said member is rotated;

v) said recessed non-tab surface shaped such that its entire surface area fits flush against the internal surface diameter of the stabilizing surface ~~to be capable of coming into substantially continuous flush contact with the inner surface of said securing surface~~ when said tab is engaged via rotation of the member to engage the tab with the tab-slot; and

said member and said post being capable of being joined by inserting said tab end of said member into said opening in said stabilizing surface of said post and rotating said member to engage the notched tab in the tab slot, and therefore being capable of forming a substantially continuous flush contact between the entire non-tab surface area of the tab end of the member and the internal surface diameter ~~inner surface~~ of said securing surface when said member is joined to said post such that the entire non-tab surface area of the tab end of the member fits flush against the internal surface diameter of the stabilizing surface.

21. (currently amended) The kit for assembling a fence brace assembly of claim 20, wherein said at least one opening is located directly opposite to at least one tab-slot, so that said member is capable of being rotated into the engaged position with said post, such that when the post and the member are joined, the longitudinal axis of the member is oriented at an angle of about 90° relative to said stabilizing surface.
22. (currently amended) The kit for assembling a fence brace assembly of claim 20, wherein said at least one opening is not directly opposite said tab slots, but is offset from at least one tab-slot, so that said member is capable of being rotated into the engaged position with said post, such that when the post and the member are joined, the longitudinal axis of the member is oriented at a non-90° angle relative to said stabilizing surface.
23. (currently amended) The kit for assembling a fence brace assembly of claim 20, wherein the area of ~~substantial~~ contact between the non-tab surface of the member and the inner surface of the post is capable of being sealed.
24. (currently amended) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, wherein the sealer is a silicone ~~silicon~~ sealer.
25. (canceled)
26. (canceled)
27. (canceled)